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Mar. 1950

RUSSWARD

Saintpaulia Growers

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JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

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Are you a hydronist? That's like an arsonist, only a hydronist is a nut about water. Anyway, this is a good time of year not to be one. Not with your violets, anyway. We hoisted the rot warning last month, and it isn't out of place to do it again. Spring is the time when a young violet's leaves lightly turn to jelly before your very eyes. So go easy with that waterin' can, kids.

Yours,

"Russ"

PRICE LIST



NEW SPRING PRICES!!

Winter's almost gone, and with it goes the risk of frozen shipments and delayed mailings due to bad weather. Already the longer, sunnier days are working magic with our stock. Even we old violet hands get a thrill at the looks of the greenhouse. You never saw such bloom! We're justly proud of the plants we are sending out.

***Amethyst, West Coast**—Pale orchid blossoms. Dark, tapered foliage. Was \$1.50, now _____ **\$1.25**

***Bi-Color**—Upper petals deep red-violet, lower lavender. Slick foliage. Large plant _____ **\$1.50**

***Blue Bird**—Fine medium blue. Improved large medium green foliage _____ **\$1.25**

***Blue Boy**—Old favorite dark blue _____ **\$1.25**

***Blue Butterfly**—Light blue, large slick heart-shaped leaves _____ **\$2.00**

***Blue Eyes**—Good-looking plant. Pale blue, slick dark foliage _____ **\$1.50**

***Blue Girl**—(Pat'd) Scalloped foliage, dark blue flower _____ **\$1.25**

***Blue Girl Amazon**—Heavy, supreme version of Blue Girl _____ **\$1.50**

***Blue Velvet**—Small plant. Slightly quilted roundish leaves, medium dark blue flower _____ **\$1.50**

Blush Amazon—Supreme version of Blush Maid. Pale pink flowers _____ **\$1.50**

***Brown's Pet**—Miniature Blue Girl. Round scalloped leaves _____ **\$2.00**

***Dainty Maid**—Slender-petaled pink flowers, small plant. Was \$1.50 **\$1.25**

***Double Duchess**—Profuse double purple flowers against medium green foliage **\$1.50**

***Double Duchess Amazon**—Supreme version of Double Duchess. Was \$2.00, now **\$1.75**

***Double Orchid**—Tapered foliage, double lavender flower. Was \$2.00, now **\$1.75**

DuPont Hybrids 1, 5, and Silver Pink—Aristocrats of the Violet world. \$2.50 each, or three for **\$6.50**

DuPont Red—Rich, claret flowers, DuPont foliage. Was \$2.25, now **\$2.00**

***Gorgeous**—(Pat'd) Spooned, red variety aptly named **\$2.00**

***Jade**—Medium blue flower. Lightly quilted foliage. Was \$2.00, now **\$1.75**

***Kewensis**—Light green foliage, medium pale blue flowers. Was \$1.50, now **\$1.25**

***Lady Geneva**—(Pat'd) Distinctive for the white border around the deep blue flower. Was \$3.00 now **\$2.75**

***Neptune**—Old favorite. Dark green foliage, red reverse. Round, blue pansy-looking flowers **\$1.50**

***Old Lace**—Deeply scalloped leaves. Dark blue flower **\$1.75**

***Orchid Beauty**—Medium green foliage, rich lavender flower **\$1.25**

***Pink Beauty**—(Pat'd) Pink flowers, medium green foliage **\$1.25**

***Pink Girl**—(Pat'd) Pink flowers on girl foliage **\$2.00**

***Purple Beauty**—Improved dark purple variety **\$1.75**

***Purple Prince**—Darkest purple. Slick, heart-shaped foliage **\$1.50**

***Red Girl**—Red-lavender flowers on Girl foliage **\$1.25**

***Red Head**—Rich claret red flowers. Slick, improved foliage. Was \$1.75, now **\$1.50**

***Rose Purple**—Remarkably large plant. Medium dark blue, improved foliage. Was \$2.00, now **\$1.75**

***Ruffles**—Medium blue flowers against very unusual tapered dark foliage with red reverse. Was \$2.00, now **\$1.75**

***Sailor Girl**—Light blue flower on Girl foliage **\$1.75**

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- ***Starlight**—Pale blue flower against dusty-green, rounded leaves \$2.00
- ***Thirty-Two**—Large, lavender flower. Glossy dark green dentate foliage. Was \$1.75, now... \$1.50
- ***Tinted Lady**—Palest of the blues. Very dark, tapered foliage \$1.50
- ***Viking**—Good dark blue. Slick green foliage with red reverse \$1.25
- ***White Lady**—(Pat'd) White flowers against medium green foliage \$1.25
- * In bloom.
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Spring is the time for potting, dividing, rooting leaves for new plants. We are glad to offer the following supplies to help you with your spring chores.

- African Violet Potting Mixture**—Our own formula, guaranteed to give you more blooms with less fuss. A light, rich soil particularly fine for violets and begonias - - - 5 quarts..... \$.75
- Vermiculite**—Excellent as rooting medium and soil conditioner—Box 7x14x7..... \$.75
- Peat Moss**—To give your soil the light, porous texture so necessary to good root growth—
Box 7x14x7..... \$.75
- Sheep Manure**—Well-rotted, sterilized, powerful. Use ½ cup per quart of potting soil.
Small box..... \$.35
- Sodium Selenate**—Small vial treats 150 plants. Instructions included \$1.00
- Nnor**—Recommended insecticide spray for African Violets.
6 oz..... \$1.00
3 bottles 1 oz..... \$1.00
- Hyponex**—Oderless powder fertilizer. One pound can \$1.00
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Shipping Information—Plants sent in 2 inch pots unless requested otherwise. Cultural instructions included. List price includes packing and mailing cost. Orders \$5.00 and over sent special delivery. We guarantee safe arrival of plants. Satisfied customers all over the country will vouch for our integrity. For your own protection, please remit by check or money order.

News Letter

March, 1950

Dear Friends:

Ever since we've been in the violet business, we've been getting occasional letters from collectors asking about the following ailment (this excellent description from the letter of Mrs. Mosses, of North Carolina): "... first notice a faint grayish tinge in the center of several plants. This rapidly progressed to a curling and drying of the small center leaves which would leave a bare patch when falling off. At no time were these plants wilted or droopy. On the contrary, they were extremely stiff. . . Ended up by losing most of my plants".

A fellow grower in Macomb, Illinois, commented that a whole crop of violets had been lost with this same condition when a water softener had been installed. This afforded at least a clue to the trouble.

We had never experienced any such disease, and curiosity was about to do us in when a lady in Vicksburg, Mississippi, came to the rescue and sent us one of her afflicted plants so that we could see for ourselves. We placed her plant in sick bay for observation. We have done nothing to it except to provide it with water. Jonesboro water, that is. New growth is coming out of what's left of the crown. Whether or not the new leaves will be distorted and diseased remains to be seen. It hasn't died, though, and that's SOMETHING, from what these good people say! Also, a healthy plant placed close by has not displayed similar symptoms, and it's been there for three weeks now.

What little evidence there is, then, would point to the water supply. Tentative suggestion to all dried-crown sufferers: Cultivate a friend with a well. Or get some water from the local ice-plant. They have wells.

What in the world would be in a city water


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supply to cause something like that? Do cities put borax in the water?

Are you bothered by worms in your plants? Not ants, worms. Earthworms. The latest dope from the Howard Days of Maryland is that these beasties will cause crown rot. They found theirs wrapped around the bases of the crowns, boa constrictor style, literally choking the poor plants to death.

Mrs. Day reminded me to comment on the fact that mice (also rabbits, gophers, hamsters, and skunks) find the flowers and foilage of the African Violet a particularly dainty dish. If your plants are being nibbled, remember to cage your pets at night.

Last month, remember, we talked about growing plants in water, and mentioned the crust which would accumulate on the container if used for very long. We knew at the time that hydrochloric acid would remove this crust, but since it is a deadly commodity to have around the house, we didn't mention it. Mrs. Street, of Kentucky, says that plain old household vinegar will remove this crust with ease. Soak overnight.

Before I forget it, I want to get a word in about Lady Geneva and similar varieties. As you know, African Violets are queer sisters. They do odd thngs. Because they do odd things, they are at once delightful and maddening. I'll never forget the first batch of Moire we brought from the originator of the variety. They weren't in bloom when we first got them, and to our horror (they cost us a pretty penny!) the first blooms came up just as Blue Boy-ish as you please.

Needless to say, we wasted no time registering a complaint. We were told that the first blooms could be expected to do this, and, furthermore, that when we shipped them out, the shock of travel would make them bloom "plain" for awhile.

We found this to be quite true of Moire, and so were not too surprised to find it true of Lady Geneva as well. Sometimes the entire white edge will just disappear not only from the open bloom on the plant at the time of shipment, but from the buds, too. More often, the white edge will

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only fade slightly, or will remain on a part of the flower, and disappear on part of it. Makes it look kinda funny, to be frank, and we've gotten some pretty hot letters about it.

It seems to work like this: Say a plant we ship out has an open flower and two buds on it, all o.k. when we pack it. When it gets to its destination, the white edge on the open flower will be partly marred. As the two buds open up, there will be even less white edge than there was on the open flower. However, NEW BUDS WHICH COME UP AFTER THE PLANT HAS ARRIVED at its new destination will be all right.

Now, I realize that this might represent a period of six weeks or more before you can enjoy the "twinkling white edge" of your Lady Geneva. I also realize that it sounds like a line of blarney, but it's on the level. If you buy one of these from us, don't let it bother you as far as our guarantee is concerned. We keep records of all orders, and if you write and say "I bought a Lady Geneva six months ago and it still isn't blooming like you say it ought to", we'll look you up in our files, and either replace the plant or refund your money. Much trouble for one pesky plant, but, in this case, worth it. Ask the man who owns one.

Have heard of propagating begonias by laying a leaf flat on moist sand and anchoring with toothpicks or hairpins, but had never heard tell of such a method with violets. Mrs. Clausen, of Minnesota, says she has been doing this successfully for several years. She says roots grow from the whole stem, resulting in more and sturdier plantlets. Imagine you'd have to be pretty careful to sterilize your sand to avoid rotting the leaf, wouldn't you, Mrs. C.?

Bertha Morey, up in Eye-a-way, couldn't break her maid of the habit of watering the violets from the top. Says she: "I finally hit on the plan of potting them on a little hill in the pot so that water would flow to or over the edge of the pot." How's that for ingenuity?

(Continued on back)

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Sustaining Member African Violet Society of America, Inc.

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